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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/770,397	02/04/2004	Peter Hofmann	028987.52962US	2742

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EXAMINER
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WILHELM, TIMOTHY

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3616

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.



## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Drawings***

1. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the slit-like openings joined to and arranged at a distance from one another of claims 8 and 13 and the at least one penetrating V-shaped or semicircular tool-dropping indentation on a carrier element of the covering of claims 9 and 14 must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 1-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The phrase, "fastened at a distance to two long-sided ends," is unclear as to what exactly applicant is claiming as the structure of the invention. Additionally, in claim 1, line 15, "is provided approximately at a height" is indefinite as it is unclear where the defined weakening is located. Claim 3 is indefinite further as it is unclear as to what is meant by "runs adjoining."

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

5. Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Haig (6,773,031). Haig discloses a side impact protective apparatus 10 for a motor vehicle occupant which is incorporated into a side wall 20 or door 22 of a motor vehicle comprising a pressure gas source 120 and a gas bag 14c which can be inflated by the pressure gas source 120, the gas bag 14c being folded together and arranged in a

Art Unit: 3616

resting position along an upper edge of the side wall 20 behind an internal covering 30 and exiting upwardly upon unfolding in the region of a railing 26 in the side wall 20 through a slot formed between the upper edge 40 of the covering 30 and the side wall and extending upward along an interior of a side window 24d as impact protection for the head region of the occupant of the motor vehicle, wherein the covering is fastened at a distance to two long-sided ends of the gas bag approximately at the height of a lower edge region 70 of the gas bag on the side wall so that, viewed from the side, an ideal connection line forms a swiveling axis for a pivotal upper region of the covering 30 and at the front side of the covering through two spaced fastenings 34, and wherein a defined weakening 40 is provided approximately at a height of the pivotal upper region. In regard to Claims 3 and 4, Haig further discloses a side impact protective apparatus 10, wherein one of the two spaced fastenings 34, viewed in the direction of travel, is a frontally positioned fastening of the covering which runs adjoining (i.e., close to) an internally positioned door opener of the motor vehicle door while the other fastener 34 is a rear-positioned fastening of the covering 30, which is arranged adjoining the defined weakening 40 of the covering 30. In regard to Claims 5 and 6, Haig further discloses the side impact protective apparatus 10 wherein the weakening 40 is defined on the front side 42 of the covering 30 and runs at least segmentally parallel to the external contour of the covering turned toward the passenger space and is arranged at a slight distance to an arch-like external contour of the covering 30.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 7 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Haig in view of Mishitake (JP 3-284443). Haig discloses the claimed invention except for a weakening 40 that is formed by several bore holes arranged at a distance to one another, wherein centers of the bore holes lie on a common, arch-like formed central line, and wherein a connection bar is arranged between two adjoining bore holes. Mishitake, however, teaches a side impact protective device EU with a covering 11 on which a weakening 17a is formed by several bore holes lying on a common arch-like formed central line, wherein a connection bar is arranged between two adjoining bore holes. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the weakening 40 in Haig by several bore holes lying on a common arch-like formed central line, wherein a connection bar is arranged between two adjoining bore holes to enable easier deployment of the side impact protective apparatus.

8. Claims 8 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Haig in view of Tajima et al (6,682,093). Haig discloses the claimed invention except for a weakening 40 that is formed by slit-like openings joined to and arranged at a distance from one another. Tajima et al, however, teaches a side impact protective device M with a sheet 25 on which a weakening 27 is formed by slit-like openings 28 joined to

Art Unit: 3616

and arranged at a distance from one another. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the weakening 40 in Haig by the slit-like openings 28 from Tajima et al joined to and arranged at a distance from one another to enable easier deployment of the side impact protective apparatus.

9. Claims 9 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Haig in view of Skirha et al (US 2002/0079677). Haig discloses the claimed invention except for a weakening 40 that is formed by at least one penetrating V-shaped or semicircular tool-dropping indentation on a carrier element of the covering. Skirha et al teaches an airbag cover 16 on which multiple V-shaped scores 20 create a weakening 18 in the structure. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to form the weakening 40 in Haig by the penetrating V-shaped indentations 20 of Skirha et al on a carrier element of the covering 30 to enable easier deployment of the side impact protective apparatus.

10. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Haig in view of Marjanski et al (5,669,627). Haig discloses the claimed invention except for a superimposed protective cap that covers the rear-positioned face fastening 34 and the weakening 40 of the covering 30. Marjanski et al teaches a side impact airbag module with an end cap 28 to close off either end of the airbag cover 10. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention to have covered the end of the rear-positioned face fastening 34 and the weakening 40 of the cover 30 with the end cap 28 of Marjanski et al in order to close off and protect the otherwise exposed fastening and weakening.

11. Claims 11 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Haig in view of Tajima et al. Haig discloses the claimed invention except for an embedded net-like fabric insert that is provided inside a carrier element of the covering 30 at least adjoining the side impact protective apparatus 10. Tajima et al, however, teaches an air bag device with M an embedded fabric insert 125 formed by a woven cloth 125a with a lattice pattern. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have incorporated the net-like fabric insert 125 of Tajima et al into the side impact protective device 10 of Haig in order to easily and more controllably contain the undeployed gas bag.

### ***Conclusion***

12. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Hofmann et al (6,616,175) discloses a gas bag restraint system that comprises an inflator 7 and airbag 9 in a cover 5 which is fastened to the side wall of a vehicle door and which has a defined weakness 23 on its front face that forms a swiveling axis for a section of the cover 5 that opens upon deployment of the gas bag 9. Eyraier (5,868,421) discloses a side air bag device 10, which is fastened to a vehicle door at a distance by a fabric flap 16.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Timothy D. Wilhelm whose telephone number is 571-272-6980. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Friday.



If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Dickson can be reached on 571-272-6669. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

TDW



**DAVID R. DUNN**  
**PRIMARY EXAMINER**